The Happineſs and Glory of Heaven, conſidered as the Houſe *of* GOD, *and* prepared *by his Son.*

A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the

DEATH

Of the Reverend

Mr. *JOSEPH COLLET,*

Who departed this LIFE *Auguſt* 21, 1741. In the *Fifty-Seventh* Year of his Age.

PREACH'D

At COAT in the County of OXFORD.

By JOSEPH STENNETT.

Publiſhed, with ſome Enlargements, at the earneſt Requeſt of the Family, and Congregation.

LONDON:

Printed for AARON WARD, at the *King's-Arms*, in *Little-Britain*; and H. WHITRIDGE, at the *Royal-Exchange*. MDCCXLII.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

JOHN XIV. 2.

In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if it were *not* ſo, *I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.*

IT is ſo far from being the deſign of true religion to eradicate, or entirely ſuppreſs the paſſions of our minds; that, when they are under its influence and regulation, they anſwer moſt valuable purpoſes, and are greatly ſubſervient to the honour of God, the intereſt of ſociety, and the welfare of our own ſouls. And as the joys of the Holy Ghoſt ariſe from an infinitely nobler principle, than thoſe which are produced by an *increaſe* of *corn and wine*; and afford a pleaſure which as much ſurpaſſes that of any earthly good; ſo the moſt trying afflictions alſo are wiſely intended for our advantage; and the deepeſt ſorrow to which a chriſtian can be ſubject, when ſanctified by the ſpirit of God, not

only produces the moſt proper, and ſeaſonable reflections in the mind; but it ſoftens the heart, and diſpoſes it to make the moſt uſeful improvement of them. And tho' it may be well counted a ſad day indeed, when we behold the widow and the fatherleſs pouring out their complaints, and almoſt refuſing to be comforted; when we ſee a mournful flock, looking at each other in the ſadneſs of their hearts, and bewailing the loſs of their tender and faithful ſhepherd; and when we behold ſuch numbers weeping over the grave of their departed friend, and father, and *ſorrowing moſt of all that they* ſhall *ſee his face*, and hear his voice *no more:* yet certainly, this is one of thoſe important ſeaſons which, if duly improved, may afford us ſingular advantage. For if we mourn, as Chriſtians ought to do, in a proper exerciſe of humiliation under ſin, and of faith, and hope in *Chriſt Jeſus*, we ſhall underſtand the *voice* of the *rod, and* know *who has appointed it*[a]: and we ſhall ſee, that 'tis by no means reaſonable, that *the fathers* ſhould always continue with their children, or that *the prophets* ſhould *live for ever*[b]: we ſhall be convinced that all is well that our heavenly father doth, and learn to improve ſurviving mercies to better

[a] Mic. vi. 9. [b] Zech. i. 5.

better advantage, from a due ſenſe of the value of thoſe we have loſt.

THAT I may therefore aſſiſt your ſorrows to theſe uſeful purpoſes, and help you to check the violence of them, I am to conſider among you, on this mournful occaſion, ſome of thoſe words, with which the bleſſed *Jeſus* inſtructed and comforted his afflicted family, when he was himſelf about to leave them; words, which it ſeems were often on the dying lips of your deceaſed paſtor, with which his own ſoul was ſupported when on the verge of the eternal world; which made him willing to part with you, and with which he laboured to make you willing to part with him.

IN the foregoing chapter we read, that *the hour* being *come* when our Lord muſt *depart out of this world*, and go *to the father*[c], he inſtitutes a ſtanding memorial of his ſufferings and love, and takes his dying leave of his diſciples, at that table: he there conjures them to attend ſtrictly to his doctrine, faithfully to follow his example, and to carry it humbly and affectionately to one another: he repreſents to them the ſorrows he was juſt about to paſs thro'; and, among other diſtreſſing circumſtances, that he ſhould be traiterouſly betray'd by one of them, denied by another, and forſaken

[c] John xiii. 1.

by all the reſt. Such a ſad repreſentation of the approaching ſufferings of their dear Maſter, ſuch a heavy charge upon themſelves, and the apprehenſions they now had, that he was about to leave them for ever, very deeply affected the poor diſciples. And indeed it is no wonder they were ſo affected, if to theſe things we add, that they now evidently ſaw that the expectations they had entertained of a temporal grandure, which he was about to ſet up in the world, and in which they imagined they were themſelves ſo largely to ſhare, were entirely fruſtrated; if we conſider that their faith was weak, and their acquaintance with the ſcheme of ſalvation but very imperfect. And indeed had their knowledge been greater, and their faith much ſtronger, yet, in the circumſtances they were in, the departure of their Lord muſt be very diſtreſſing. They had for a conſiderable time ſat under the inſtruction of his lips; they had daily ſeen the mighty wonders with which his heavenly doctrine was confirmed; his humble, holy, lovely example had been continually before their eyes, and they had been honoured with a perſonal and intimate friendſhip with him: it muſt be ſad indeed, to be deprived at once of all theſe bleſſed privileges, and to be left in a wide world *as ſheep* without a *ſhepherd*, and in a world too,

too, which had treated him ſo ill already, and was about to treat him ſo much worſe; and conſequently, where they could expect but little favour: for if it was done thus to the *green-tree*, what muſt *the dry* expect? Thus a concern for their own welfare, as well as an affectionate regard to him, fill'd their ſouls with grief.

THEIR gracious Maſter not only beheld with compaſſion the uncommon ſadneſs that hung upon their countenances, but he perfectly knew the inward ſorrows of their hearts, and therefore proceeds, in the beginning of this chapter, to comfort them in the moſt tender manner. *Let not your hearts*, ſays he, *be troubled, ye believe in God, believe alſo in me*[d]. As if he had ſaid, "Tho' ſome ſorrow is reaſonable and de-
"cent on this occaſion; yet *let not your*
"*hearts* be overcharged with it; your faith
"I know is ſmall, and I have often blamed
"you for the weakneſs of it; but ſtill *you*
"*believe in God*, you believe in him as the
"great creator and ſovereign diſpoſer of all
"things; and as you have the moſt undeni-
"able evidence on which to found this
"faith, ſo it ſhould ſupport you in your
"preſent diſtreſſes: but what ſhould hin-
"der, but that you ſhould *alſo believe in*
"*me?* Have I not given you ſufficient proof
"from

[d] John xiv. 1.

" from prophecy, and from miracle, that
" I am the true *Meſſiah?* have I not been
" *declared to be the ſon of God with power* [e]*?*
" I have accounted *it no robbery to be equal*
" *with God* [f]*:* and the Father has ſufficient-
" ly atteſted to my divinity: and why
" then ſhould you not *believe alſo in me?*
" You have had the fulleſt evidence of my
" mediatorial character; you have been a-
" bundantly convinced of my love to you,
" and my ſpecial intereſt at the throne.
" Well then—tho' you have thus far lived
" in ſome meaſure by ſight, as you have
" had my bodily preſence with you; ſo
" now you muſt learn to *live* more *by faith.*
" None of you have *ſeen God* the Father
" *at any time* [g], but yet *you believe in* him:
" you have ſeen me, indeed, in theſe hum-
" ble incarnate circumſtances, but when
" I am gone, you muſt *believe in me alſo,*
" when you ſee me not."

THUS theſe words furniſh us with a good argument for the divinity of *Chriſt:* for the faith here refer'd to, is ſuch a religious act of the mind as can terminate on no object but God himſelf. We ought to believe the prophets, and the apoſtles: but ſurely, it is no where ſaid, that we ſhould *believe in Moſes* or *in Paul.* But we *believe in God,* we reſt our abſolute and entire dependance

[e] Rom. i. 4. [f] Phil. ii. 6. [g] John i. 18.

pendance on him, well, and we muſt act the ſame faith in *Chriſt Jeſus alſo*. And as God has declared that he *will not give* his *glory to another* [h]; ſo it is a full evidence of the proper divinity of our bleſſed Lord, *that all men* are thus to *honour the Son, even as they honour the father* [i].

THEN follow the words of the text. *In my father's houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.* " *You believe in* " *God*; he is my Father, *believe alſo in me.* " You have truſted me in ſome meaſure " here, while on earth, and in an enemies " country, and you have found your ac- " count in ſo doing: but I am going " home to *my Father's houſe*, and there " ſurely you may put your full confidence " in me, and hope for much more good. " I ſhall paſs, indeed, as I have ſaid, thro' " many ſufferings, but they are in the way " to glory: and tho' I am betray'd and " denied by ungrateful men below, it is " in order to be received and acknowledged " by God above. I muſt go *thro' the* " *valley of the ſhadow of death*, but it is in " the way to *my Father's houſe*: it is a glo- " rious habitation, of vaſt extent, and richly " ſupply'd with every conveniency, and " accommodation. I go thither, not only

" to

[h] Iſa. 42. 8. [i] John. 5. 23.

" to reſt from my own labours, but *to*
" *prepare a place for you:* and tho' *you*
" *cannot come now*; yet, notwithſtanding
" all your weakneſs and unworthineſs, in
" due time, you ſhall follow me thither.
" You may depend on the truth and cer-
" tainty of all this, for *if it* had been
" otherwiſe, *I would have told you* ſo.
" I, who have never yet deceived you in
" any thing, would have faithfully in-
" formed you of this alſo."

HAVING given you this general view of the words, in my further conſideration of them, I ſhall,

I. LAY before you a brief account of the evidence we have, of a ſtate of bleſſedneſs, as the future portion of the ſaints.

II. ENDEAVOUR to explain the particulars, our Lord here gives us, of the happineſs of that condition. And,

III. MAKE ſome application of theſe things; and that, more eſpecially, to the ſolemn occaſion of our preſent meeting together.

I. THEN, I am to give you ſome account of the evidence we have of a bleſſed futurity, as the portion of the ſaints. And,

FIRST, If the diſcoveries of nature and reaſon were fairly conſulted, they would give

give us very conſiderable light into this matter.

FOR it is hardly poſſible to contemplate the viſible world, with its wonderful variety of inhabitants, and furniture, even under the diſadvantages of the fall, without acknowledging ſome firſt cauſe, ſome infinite, all-wiſe, and omnipotent Creator of all. And who can impartially conſider the beautiful order, and dependance of theſe mighty works, or can conſult the formation of his own mind, and the impreſſions he finds naturally inlaid there; who can duly conſider the doctrine of providence, and obſerve the conduct of heaven therein, with out acknowledging the infinite attributes and perfections, which are moſt juſtly aſcribed in the ſcriptures to that Being, who is the Creator and Governour of all things? And,

1. THEN, if we conclude, as it is highly rational we ſhould, that the Being who erected the grand edifice of the univerſe, who has placed in the heavens ſo many wonderful orbs of light, and given them ſuch an amazing power, and regularity, and velocity of motion, and all to anſwer the moſt uſeful and noble purpoſes; who *hung* this mighty globe, on which we live, *upon nothing*[k]; and has furniſh'd it with

[k] Job. xxvi.. 7.

ſuch wonderful appendages; who form'd our nature, and has continued, for ſo many ages, a ſucceſſion of rational beings on the earth, as well as ſuch a vaſt variety of lower orders of creatures, together with proper proviſion for their nouriſhment and defence; if, I ſay, we conclude from hence, and from the regular government of theſe great and wonderful works, as, I think, we neceſſarily muſt, that the author and ſuperintendent of them is a Being of infinite power; ſurely, it is then eaſy to conceive the poſſibility of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. For, what of this can be too difficult, for ſuch a mighty hand to perform?

AND then, if we attend to the uniform dictates of that natural light which was implanted in us by our Maker, and who is himſelf the infinite ſource of all knowledge; we muſt ſee ſuch a conſtitution of things to be perfectly conformable to true wiſdom.

AND moreover, there are ſuch viſible marks of great goodneſs, in the proviſions made for the welfare even of the meaneſt reptile, nay, for the ſupport and nouriſhment of the moſt contemptible plant in the vegetable world, and much more for the temporal advantage of the human race; that one cannot help concluding, that, where there was ſufficient wiſdom to contrive

trive a future and everlaſting bleſſedneſs, adapted to the nature of ſuch rational creatures, as are the favourites of heaven, and power to provide ſuch a bleſſedneſs, there ſhould be goodneſs enough to beſtow it upon them. To which I might add, that, as theſe attributes, and eſpecially the goodneſs of the divine Being ſhould diſpoſe him to make ſuch a proviſion for his people: ſo his own glory wou'd be eternally advanced by it; and one would think, ſince this has been evidently in view in the lower works of time, he wou'd not fail to promote it, in this more illuſtrious way and manner. But,

2. If we conſider the ſtrong appetite for immortality that is implanted in all human kind; the eager thirſt of multitudes of thoſe who know the moſt, after a ſtill more extenſive knowledge; and the ſtrong deſire the mind has, after a larger power, and ſphere of action; the fetters in which we all feel ourſelves confin'd, and the glorious liberty all truly wiſe and good men long for; ſurely, I ſay, if we conſider theſe things, and at the ſame time obſerve that the appetites of the lower parts of the creation are ſo abundantly ſatisfied, we muſt conclude, that ſo ſtrong a one as this, was not ſo univerſally planted in human nature, without ſome intention to gratify it. And,

3. IF to this we add, a due conſideration of the unequal diſtributions of divine Providence in this world, we ſhall be greatly confirmed in the reaſonableneſs of this doctrine. For it may not only be ſaid now, that *all things come alike to all*[1]; but, very often, the moſt profligate among the ſons of men are poſſeſs'd of the ſtrongeſt and the moſt vigorous conſtitutions, have the livelieſt guſt for ſenſual pleaſures, and the moſt plentiful opportunities to gratify their vicious inclinations: thoſe who allow themſelves in all kinds of fraud, and oppreſſion, thoſe that wallow in filthineſs ſo as to render themſelves a ſcandal to human nature, thoſe who *ſet their mouth againſt the heavens*, that *blaſpheme God and look up*, ſuch as *ruſh on the thick boſſes of his buckler*, ſuch as *drink iniquity like water*, and *work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*, and go on in their courſes without any remorſe, *their ſtrength is* often *firm*, and *they are not in trouble as other men*; *their eyes ſtand out with fatneſs*, and *they have more than heart can wiſh*; they go down, alſo, to the grave in peace, *have no bands in their death*, and leave large eſtates to their deſcendants; nay, and ſome times too, have their wretched names embalm'd by the folly and flattery of poſterity[m]: while, on the other hand, many of thoſe of

[1] Eccleſ. ix. 2. [m] Pſal. lxxiii. and xvii.

of the quite oppoſite character, who truly love and fear God, who diligently labour to know and do his will, whoſe lives are employed in a courſe of behaviour moſt becoming rational creatures, in a courſe of obedience to God, and of benevolence and uſefulneſs to mankind, ſuch perſons as theſe, are often moſt remarkably afflicted in this life; they frequently groan under lingring and painful diſeaſes of body; are often expos'd to the moſt diſtreſſing poverty; nay, are many times inhumanly *perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake*, and treated *as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things*[n], *being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented*[o]: they are often full of inward trouble, from an humble conſciouſneſs of their own weakneſs and unworthineſs, and for want of the light of God's countenance: they many times are brought to the grave by ſome moſt afflictive and painful diſtemper; and, not a few of them, by the violence of wicked men; while their poſterity have often been expoſed to miſery, and their good names been given up to reproach, and contempt. Now, I ſay, ſince the hiſtory, and experience of all generations will teſtify, that this is a fair repreſentation of the caſe; and ſince, at the ſame time, it is eaſy to prove that there muſt be a ſtrict ſuperintendency of Providence, or

[n] 1 Cor. iv. 13. [o] Heb. xi. 37.

or elſe it wou'd be impoſſible for the world to ſubſiſt as it doth: and it is as evident that the great Governour of all things is neceſſarily juſt and good, and the rules of juſtice and goodneſs are his unalterable will; one is naturally led to conclude, that ſince there is no proper proviſion made in this world for the vindication of his righteouſneſs and honour; there will be a ſeaſon of exact and impartial retribution hereafter, when all theſe things will be ſet right. But,

4. Theſe arguments have been greatly ſtrengthned by the common conſent of all ages and nations in the world [p]; and that we find thoſe particular perſons who have contradicted this general opinion, have been, almoſt every where, look'd upon with aſtoniſhment and horror, by the reſt of mankind. And, certainly, a principle that has ſo univerſally prevailed even in the darkeſt times, and among the moſt barbarous nations in the world, bids fair for a trace that was impreſs'd on the human mind at firſt by the God of nature [q], and which was not entirely eraſed by the fall. To which I muſt add,

5. THAT

[p] —Ut Deos eſſe natura opinamur, qualeſq; ſint, ratione cognoſcimus; ſic permanere animos arbitramur conſenſu nationum omnium: *&c. Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. lib.* 1.

[q] Omni autem in re conſenſio omnium gentium, lex naturæ putanda eſt. *Id. ibid.*

5. THAT, bad as the world is, and notwithſtanding the bias wicked men have been under, to indulge a hope that they ſhould never be brought to account; and notwithſtanding all the artful and aſſiduous labours of Satan and his inſtruments, to remove this great barrier of virtue out of the way; yet we find it has ſuch an influence on the minds of moſt men, as greatly confirms the truth of it. Thus the generality we ſee are willing to take ſome ſort of meaſures, tho', for the moſt part, very wrong ones, to ſecure to themſelves a future happineſs; and the moſt harden'd ſinners, if they would but ſpeak out, would acknowledge, that with all their endeavours to obliterate the impreſſions they have received, in order to indulge their vicious inclinations with the greater boldneſs and ſecurity; yet they cannot avoid ſome diſturbance, more or leſs, from apprehenſions of a ſtate after death, which they are convinced, if there be any, muſt be fatal to them. And after all the daring impiety of a wicked life here, and the impudent banter with which ſome have treated the world to come, how many of theſe poor abandon'd wretches have been filled with the utmoſt horror and aſtoniſhment at the approaches of their diſſolution; and have cried out for the aſſiſtance of thoſe on their death beds, whom they have

have abuſed and deſpiſed in the time of their health.

AND, on the other hand, the obſervation of all ages teſtifies, that multitudes of perſons have been ſupported under the moſt grievous diſtreſſes of life, and the immediate apprehenſions of death itſelf, with the hopes of a bleſſed immortality. Nor has this been only the caſe of men of great natural courage, or ſtrong imagination, but of ſuch who, from a doubtful mind, or timerous heart, have *thro' fear of death*, been *all their life time ſubject to bondage*[r]. So that we have many inſtances of thoſe, even of the weaker ſex, and the more tender age, who, from this perſwaſion, and in theſe views, have launched out of time, and that too by the moſt ſhocking kind of tortures that a cruel perſecutor cou'd invent, with ſerenity of mind, and ſometimes in the greateſt tranſports of joy and triumph.

THUS, I think, if we conſult the attributes of God, the appetite to immortality which is ſo univerſally blended with human nature, the inequality of the diſpenſations of Providence in this life, the conſent of all nations, and the univerſal influence this opinion has, more or leſs, on the conſciences of mankind, and that eſpecially in the moſt thoughtful time, in a dying hour, we have much

[r] Heb. ii. 15.

much reaſon to conclude, notwithſtanding all the atheiſt would rather wiſh than believe, that there is really a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments. But, without dwelling any longer on the weak diſcoveries of fallen reaſon,

SECONDLY, That divine revelation, which comes ſo abundantly recommended to us by excellency of its doctrine, the harmony of its parts, the accompliſhment of its prophecies, and the evidence of its miracles, as well as the happy and uniform influence it has had upon the hearts and lives of true believers in all ages, this wonderful revelation, I ſay, has abundantly confirmed the important truth under our conſideration; and indeed, it is the great deſign and buſineſs of it to lead us into the full belief of this doctrine, and to make the beſt uſe of it, for the glory of God, and our everlaſting advantage.

THUS we are very early informed that, as *Enoch walked with God*, ſo he was tranſlated into this ſtate of everlaſting bleſſedneſs; *he was not, for God took him* [s]. And as *Job* obſerves, *that the wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction*; and *he ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath* [t]: ſo it was the chief ſupport of his ſoul under his great afflictions, that he *knew that* his *redeemer*

[s] Gen. v. 24. [t] Job. xxi. 30.

lived; and *that* he ſhould *ſtand at the latter day upon the earth: and tho' after* his *ſkin worms ſhould deſtroy this body, yet in* his *fleſh* he ſhould *ſee God: whom*, ſays he, *I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another*; *tho' my reins be conſumed within me*[u]. And, as the prophet *Iſaiah* deſcribes the puniſhment of the future world, by that *Tophet* which was *ordained of old*; which is *deep and large: the pile whereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone, doth kindle it*[w]: ſo *David* plainly aſſerts, that *the wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*[x]: that *he cometh to judge the earth*: and *he ſhall judge the world with righteouſneſs, and the people with his truth*[y]: and in many paſſages repreſents, in a very lively manner, the future happineſs of the juſt, and alſo his own hope. *As for me*, ſays he, *I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs: I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs*[z]. And *Aſaph*, after all his reaſoning on the proſperity of the wicked, comforts himſelf with this, that tho' his *fleſh and* his *heart* ſhould *fail*; yet *God* was *the ſtrength of* his *heart, and* his *portion for ever*[a]. The wiſe man aſſerts this in the cleareſt terms, when he ſays, God will

[u] Job. xix. 25.— [w] Iſa. xxx. 33. [x] Pſal. ix. 17. [y] Pſal. xcvi. 13. [z] Pſal. xvii. 15. [a] Pſal. lxxiii. 26.

will *render to every man according to his works*[b]; and that *every work, and every ſecret thing* ſhall be brought *into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*[c]. And it were eaſy to ſhew that this is the doctrine of all the prophets, as well as *Daniel*; who ſays, that *many that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt*[d]. Nor need you, I am perſuaded, be told how fully this important truth is revealed, and what light is given to it, in the new teſtament. What conſtant care did our Lord take to convince his followers, that his *kingdom* was *not of this world*[e], and to fix their minds on the hope of everlaſting bleſſedneſs? What lively repreſentations doth he give of the manner of the great and final judgment, and the eternal conſequences of it[f]? And as in the words of my text, and many other places, he comforted his diſciples with the bleſſed hope of the enjoyment of himſelf in the world above; ſo he aroſe from the dead, and entered into the heavenly glory in their view, in order to confirm their faith and ours in theſe things. Nor need I, ſurely, put you in mind how largely the apoſtles treat on this ſubject,

[b] Prov. xxiv. 12. [c] Eccleſ. xii. 14. [d] Dan. xii. 2. [e] John xviii. 36. [f] See Mat. ch. xiii. and xvi. and xxiv. and xxv.

and with what excellent advantage to the chriſtian doctrine: nor in what a particular manner the circumſtances of mankind in this awful futurity, both of happineſs, and miſery, are deſcribed in the revelation. For tho' *no* mortal *eye hath ſeen, nor ear heard, neither* hath *it entered into the heart of man* to form equal conceptions, either of the glories or the torments, of an eternal world[g]: yet God has been pleaſed to favour us with ſome accounts of each of theſe conditions; wherein the ſtrongeſt figures are borrowed both from nature, and art, and things with which we are converſant, in order to raiſe the moſt awful ideas in our minds, and to make the moſt laſting impreſſions upon us, about things of ſo vaſt an importance. But I muſt confine myſelf,

II. To the account our Lord gives us, in the text, of the future ſtate of bleſſedneſs, *prepared* for the righteous. *In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I wou'd have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.* And,

FIRST, Then it is an *houſe:* a very proper figure to repreſent the heavenly ſtate; ſince this is a conveniency which the

[g] 1 Cor. ii. 9

the children of men enjoy to much greatter advantage, than the reſt of Gods creatures here below: and it is intended, no doubt, to let us know,

1. THAT the condition of the ſaints in the upper world, is a ſettled ſtate, in oppoſition to that which they are expoſed to in this life, which is a travelling condition. *They* are *ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth*[h], are taking many a weary ſtep in their way home; and the wilderneſs they paſs thro' will only admit of a tent, which is ſet up for a little time, and then taken down again; or however, the beſt lodging and entertainment they meet with on the road, is that of *a way-faring man who turneth aſide, to tarry for a night*[i]. But, in that bleſſed country, there is a ſettled dwelling, an *houſe prepared* for their reception and reſidence. Thus *Iſrael wandered*, for forty years *in the* wilderneſs, in a *ſolitary way*, and they found no city to dwell in; they lodg'd in tents in their paſſage, and lived in expectation of that land of reſt where there was a *city of habitation*[k]. But,

2. IT repreſents alſo a ſtate of ſafety. The traveller is expoſed in his journey to the inclemency of the weather, to the exceſſes of heat and cold, to ſtorms of wind and rain, to rough and tireſome paths, to briars and

[h] Heb. xi. 13. [i] Iſa. xiv. 8. [k] Pſ. cvii. 4—7.

and thorns, and perils of robbers and beaſts of prey: but when he is got into his habitation, he is in a good meaſure ſecure from all theſe. And this is a feint repreſentation of the compleat happineſs of the chriſtian pilgrim, who, when once he gets home, is delivered from all his doubts and fears, his errors and corruptions, from the temptations of *Satan*, and the perſecutions of cruel men: his trials and afflictions are then all over, there is an end of all the diſtreſſes of time, and the dangers of the way; and he enters into an habitation of everlaſting ſecurity. Again,

3. IT ſignifies alſo a ſtate of great accommodation. On the road to heaven, it is true, there are purveyors appointed to ſupply us with ſome proviſions as we go along, and angels themſelves miniſter to our wants; we have ſome *manna* in the *wilderneſs*, and ſome *water out of the rock:* but theſe are only the neceſſary ſupplies for our ſupport, in our paſſage thro' a ſtrange country; and we muſt be content with what accommodations we meet with. Our food is often ſo mean, and ill managed, as to give us little pleaſure or refreſhment; and our lodging ſo incommodious and uneaſy, as to afford us but little reſt: and we are, many times, ſo diſordered with the fatigues and fears of the way, as not to reliſh the one,

or

or to reſt in the other, be they ever ſo good. But when we get home, we ſhall not only be provided with a ſupply of all things neceſſary, but with every thing that may contribute to conveniency and delight. For heaven is a houſe plentifully furniſh'd with a rich variety of accommodations; and theſe are all ſuited to the circumſtances, character, and taſte of the inhabitants. And then,

4. AND laſtly, an houſe is a place of continuance, and ſo is the habitation above. *This is not* the *reſt* of *the people of God: for it is* not only *polluted*[l], but it muſt ſoon *be diſſolved:* but *there remains* one *for* them[m], that will endure for ever. Here they *have no continuing city, but they ſeek one to come*[n]. Their heavenly home is not only an ancient ſtructure, contrived with ſuch divine art, and built with ſuch ſtrength, as to be ſecure againſt all the ſtorms and waſtes of time; but it is an everlaſting habitation, *an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*[o]. But I haſten,

SECONDLY, our Lord calls it his *Father's houſe:* and thro' him, it is the houſe of our God and Father. Thus he ſpeaks of this bleſſed ſtate to *Mary Magdalene*, juſt after his

[l] Mic. ii. 10. [m] Heb. iv. 9. [n] Ch. xiii. 14.
[o] 2 Cor. v. 1.

his reſurrection: *go*, ſays he, *to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God*[p].

1. THE great *Jehovah* is the builder of it. He is indeed the Creator of the univerſe; for as the apoſtle ſays, *every houſe is built by ſome man; but he that built all things is God*[q]. And yet ſome under-workmen have been employed about our dwellings here below, and they have left evident marks of their weakneſs, and want of ſkill in the works they have endeavoured to frame, repair, or furniſh for us. But this glorious edifice is, moſt ſtrictly ſpeaking, *a building of God*[r]; it is the work of God alone, and it is the maſter-piece of this great architect, with all its furniture and accommodations. His infinite abilities ſhine forth in every part of the work. Almighty power has laid the foundation of it on the everlaſting hills; and *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf* is *the chief corner ſtone*[s]. Infinite wiſdom is diſplay'd in the choice of its ſituation, and in every part of the ſtructure. *Beautiful for ſituation, the joy of* all its inhabitants is mount *Zion*, which is above, *the city of the great King*[t]. If it may be ſaid of the *houſe* of God below, that its *beams are cedar*, and its

[p] John. xx. 17. [q] Heb. iii. 4. [r] 2 Cor. v. 1.
[s] Eph. ii. 20. [t] Pſ. xlviii. 2.

its *rafters* are *of fir*; that it is overlaid within and without with pure gold, and garniſhed with precious ſtones, and that it has *ſalvation* for its *walls and bulwarks*[u]: what figures can ſufficiently expreſs the ſtrength, and beauty, and glory of this ſtately edifice? The great Lord of heaven and earth who built it, has alſo furniſhed it, in every reſpect anſwerable to all theſe great perfections of his nature: and the attendance, and houſe-keeping within, is every way ſuitable to his infinite goodneſs, and the dignity of his character, as well as the grandeur of the building. It ſurpaſſes all the fabricks that ever were erected beſides. We have ſeen ſome palaces, which have been the work of much time, and vaſt expence; and we have read of others in profane hiſtory, which for coſt and magnificence, almoſt exceed all credit; and the ſacred ſcriptures inform us that the houſe of *Solomon* was the wonder of the whole earth: but when the King of Kings will build a palace for himſelf and his family, in the realms of glory, his boundleſs wiſdom and power will take care that it ſhall ſurpaſs all theſe things, infinitely more than the tabernacle of the ſun does the habitation of a glow worm; and his inexhauſtible treaſures will abundantly furniſh out the expence. The

[u] Iſa. xxvi. 1.

world below is the contrivance of his wiſdom, and it glorioufly diſplays his power: he *laid the foundations of the earth, and the beams of his chambers in the waters*[w]; he *ſtretched out the heavens as a curtain, and as a tent to dwell in*[x]; and has furniſhed both the one and the other, in the aſtoniſhing manner in which we behold them. The convenience, beauty, and magnificence of the temple of old, and the wiſdom with which the ſeveral parts of it were adapted to ſacred purpoſes, are convincing proofs of divine contrivance and direction; and the goſpel church, under the new teſtament, in its original purity and glory, is evidently a *building of God*: its *foundation* is on the *rock of ages*; its architecture is infinitely worthy the contrivance of ſuch a builder, and his power has been nobly diſplay'd in the execution of every part of the great deſign, and in the preſervation of it to this day. But what is the glorious fabrick of the natural world; what was the palace which Solomon built with human hands for the King of heaven, tho' on a divine plan; nay, what is the goſpel-temple, which has ſo vaſtly exceeded that under the law; when either of them is compared with *the houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?* And then as God himſelf has built it, ſo,

2. IT

[w] Pſ. civ. 2, 3, 5. [x] Iſa. xl. 22.

2. IT is *his houſe*, as it is the place of his ſpecial and eternal reſidence. Indeed God is every where preſent; but here he delights to dwell, and to give the cleareſt and fulleſt diſcoveries of himſelf: it muſt therefore be a ſituation of the moſt exalted glory. The Lord took his evening walks in the garden of *Eden*, and that made it a paradiſe indeed. A viſionary manifeſtation of the divine preſence at *Bethel*, made the patriarch cry out with an awful rapture, *this is ſurely none other but the houſe of God, and this is the gate of heaven*[y]. When *Moſes* had but a glimps of this glory, and ſaw but the *back part* of the Almighty, as he paſſed by, you know the rays of the divine Majeſty left ſuch a reflection upon his countenance, that the people were afraid to come nigh *him*; and he was obliged to put a veil on his face, while he delivered his meſſage to them[z]. The Shecinah, the glory that reſted on the mercy-ſeat, and that ſometimes filled the temple, dignify'd that ſacred place in a ſtupendous manner: And when the great apoſtle of the gentiles was *caught up into the third heaven*, the glory, which he ſaw, and the things which he heard, were, it ſeems, beyond all human repreſentation, and not lawful indeed to be deſcribed by a mortal tongue[a].

[y] Gen. xxviii. 17. [z] Exod. xxxiv. [a] 2 Cor. xii. 2.

world below is the contrivance of his wiſdom, and it glorioufly diſplays his power: he *laid the foundations of the earth, and the beams of his chambers in the waters*[w]; he *ſtretched out the heavens as a curtain, and as a tent to dwell in*[x]; and has furniſhed both the one and the other, in the aſtoniſhing manner in which we behold them. The convenience, beauty, and magnificence of the temple of old, and the wiſdom with which the ſeveral parts of it were adapted to ſacred purpoſes, are convincing proofs of divine contrivance and direction; and the goſpel church, under the new teſtament, in its original purity and glory, is evidently a *building of God*: its *foundation* is on the *rock of ages*; its architecture is infinitely worthy the contrivance of ſuch a builder, and his power has been nobly diſplay'd in the execution of every part of the great deſign, and in the preſervation of it to this day. But what is the glorious fabrick of the natural world; what was the palace which Solomon built with human hands for the King of heaven, tho' on a divine plan; nay, what is the goſpel-temple, which has ſo vaſtly exceeded that under the law; when either of them is compared with *the houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?* And then as God himſelf has built it, ſo,

2. IT

[w] Pſ. civ. 2, 3, 5. [x] Iſa. xl. 22.

2. IT is *his houſe*, as it is the place of his ſpecial and eternal reſidence. Indeed God is every where preſent; but here he delights to dwell, and to give the cleareſt and fulleſt diſcoveries of himſelf: it muſt therefore be a ſituation of the moſt exalted glory. The Lord took his evening walks in the garden of *Eden*, and that made it a paradiſe indeed. A viſionary manifeſtation of the divine preſence at *Bethel*, made the patriarch cry out with an awful rapture, *this is ſurely none other but the houſe of God, and this is the gate of heaven*[y]. When *Moſes* had but a glimps of this glory, and ſaw but the *back part* of the Almighty, as he paſſed by, you know the rays of the divine Majeſty left ſuch a reflection upon his countenance, that the people were afraid to come nigh *him*; and he was obliged to put a veil on his face, while he delivered his meſſage to them[z]. The Shecinah, the glory that reſted on the mercy-ſeat, and that ſometimes filled the temple, dignify'd that ſacred place in a ſtupendous manner: And when the great apoſtle of the gentiles was *caught up into the third heaven*, the glory, which he ſaw, and the things which he heard, were, it ſeems, beyond all human repreſentation, and not lawful indeed to be deſcribed by a mortal tongue[a].

[y] Gen. xxviii. 17. [z] Exod. xxxiv. [a] 2 Cor. xii. 2.

The account we have of this palace of the great King, in the *Revelation*, is indeed the moſt illuſtrious repreſentation, that was ever given to the ſons of men. *Its walls*, it ſeems *are jaſper*, and *its foundations precious ſtones*; *its gates are pearls*, and its pavement *is pure gold, like clear glaſs:* there is *no night* nor danger *there*, for *the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The pure river of life*, that *proceeds out of the throne, makes all the* inhabitants *glad*; *and there is a tree which bears twelve manner of fruits, and* whoſe *leaves are for the healing of the nations. The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it:* and the bleſſed inhabitants are all kings and prieſts, and they ſhall ſee the *face* of God, his *name ſhall* be *in their foreheads*, and *they ſhall reign for ever and ever*[b]. Something may be collected from theſe repreſentations, and they fill our minds with the loftieſt ideas of which they are capable; but ſtill they all come infinitely ſhort of the ſpiritual glory of the original itſelf.

As it is God's own reſidence, it muſt be ſuited to the dignity of his nature: and this alſo aſſures us of its abſolute purity. The nobleſt palaces of the princes of this world are often polluted with the worſt kinds of defilement: the *houſe* of God himſelf under

[b] Rev. ch. xxi. and xxii.

der the old teſtament, tho' appointed for the moſt ſacred ſervices, yet was long made *a den of thieves*[c]; the *temple of the Holy Ghoſt* is often now defiled; and the goſpel-church hath its pollutions: but the *houſe not made with hands* above is holy like him that built it, and who condeſcends to become its inhabitant. He is *of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity*[d] without indignation; and therefore *nothing that defiles* can poſſibly *enter* there[e]. If the great law-giver of *Iſrael* was commanded to *put off* his *ſhoes*, on drawing nigh the appearance of God below, and was told *the ground whereon* he ſtood was *holy*[f]; if the ſituation of the typical throne under the law was called *the holy of holies*, and the moſt eminent prophet of his time, when he ſaw the viſion of the Lord in his temple, and the *ſeraphims* adoring his holineſs, cried out, *wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts*[g]; what muſt be the purity of that ſituation where this holy Being reſides for ever, and makes the moſt clear and conſtant diſcoveries of himſelf?

AGAIN, ſince God keeps his reſidence in heaven, it muſt certainly be a place of perfect

[c] Mat. xxi. 13. [d] Hab. i. 13. [e] Rev. xxi. 27.
[f] Exod. iii. 5. [g] Iſa. vi. 5.

fect happineſs; becauſe there are the cleareſt manifeſtations of his glory, and the greateſt intimacy is to be obtain'd with him. There we ſhall ſee him nigh, and not afar off, *ſee him as he is*[h], and *be like him.* All the ſpiritual family will be there gathered together, to enjoy an everlaſting feſtival; and the elegance and plenty of the entertainment will be a proper diſplay of the dignity of his character, and the bounty of his heart that provides it. If the meaneſt reptile is taken care of by God's providence, and *the young ravens* are fed *when* they cry[i], if all the tenants of his vaſt eſtate below, are comfortably provided for; what muſt be the plenty of his *manſion*-houſe above? There is *manna* in abundance, and *rivers of pleaſure* run *at his right hand for ever more*[k]. All the bleſſed inhabitants are *abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of* that *houſe*, and they *drink* freely of thoſe ſacred *pleaſures*[l].

BUT it muſt alſo to this be added, that the *houſe* where God himſelf reſides, is to be ſure a place of perfect ſafety. No enemy can injure, no *thief* can *break thro' and ſteal*, and, in one word, the bleſſedneſs is eternal. As God has built it, and he dwells there, who is unchangeable, and endures for ever; ſo muſt the habitation of his glory too. Many

[h] 1 John iii. 2 [i] Pſal. cxlvii. 9. [k] Pſal. xvi. 11. [l] Pſal. xxvi. 8.

Many of the palaces of the greateſt princes upon earth, with all their ſtrength and grandeur are utterly deſtroy'd, and the reſt muſt all ſubmit to the injuries and ruin of time; nay, both the firſt, and ſecond temple are now no more, neither is there one ſtone of either of theſe glorious fabricks left upon another. The world itſelf muſt give way, in this reſpect, the foundations of it will e'er long be ſhaken, and the *elements* will *melt with fervent heat:* the planets muſt quit their orbits, the ſun and moon be ſwallowed up in obſcure darkneſs, and all nature fall into one common ruin: but in the midſt of all this wreck of worlds, the glorious palace above will ſtand faſt; and when millions of ages have rolled on, its ſtrength, and beauty, and glory, and plenty will continue ſtill the ſame, and like the great houſeholder endure for ever. And tho' the goſpel-church with all its outward forms and ordinances, and with all its inconveniences and diſtreſſes too, muſt give way, yet the church triumphant can admit of no revolution, nor end. But I proceed,

THIRDLY, there are *many manſions* in this ſtately palace.

THE original word here rendered manſions [m], ſignifies abiding, dwelling places; they are places to dwell in, and laſting dwellings.

[m] Μοναὶ.

dwellings. The word is, I think, uſed no where in the new teſtament but only in this place, and in the 23[d] verſe of this chapter; where our Lord ſays, *if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*[n]. So that this confirms and illuſtrates what has been already ſaid, of the duration of this bleſſedneſs: for as the palace itſelf is a laſting building, and the great Lord of it dwells in it for ever; ſo all its ſeveral apartments, with all their furniture and proviſions, and thoſe that dwell in them, endure for ever alſo. They will then have no occaſion to complain as *David*, and other ſaints have often done here below; *we are ſtrangers before thee, and ſojourners, as all our fathers* were, *our days are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding*[o]: for they will no longer dwell in *houſes of clay*, but they will enjoy eternal youth and vigour, and their habitations will be everlaſting.

AND then, as theſe *manſions* are durable, ſo there are *many* of them: which ſeems intended,

1. To repreſent the greatneſs and the extent of the bleſſedneſs of the upper-world. It muſt be a large houſe that has *many* apartments in it. How common is it for the

[n] —Μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιήσομεν. [o] 1 Chro. xxix. 15.

the inhabitants of this world to complain of the ſtraitneſs of their dwellings, and the narrow limits of their poſſeſſions? Nor is this the caſe only of private perſons, who often envy the ſituation of their neighbours, and encroach upon their properties: but the moſt extenſive dominions will not ſatisfy an ambitious mind; and what confuſions this has occaſioned among mankind all hiſtory teſtifies: we read even of one prince, that he lamented the narrowneſs of his dominions, when he had conquered all the known world. Nor doth this ariſe only from the unbounded avarice and ambition of human nature, but alſo from the incapacity of any thing here below to give a reaſonable ſatisfaction to an immortal mind. Our Lord therefore lets us know, that all theſe inconveniences will be removed *in* his *Father's houſe*; that tho' the family will be very large, there will be room enough; and tho' the deſires of the inhabitants will increaſe in proportion to their advancement, yet there will be abundant proviſion to ſatisfy them all: for the happineſs of that ſtate is an ocean, without a brink, and without a bottom, *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*[p]. And,

2. THIS mode of expreſſion ſeems intended alſo, to let us know, that this happineſs will

[p] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

be accommodated to the circumſtances, ſituation, employment, and taſte of every particular inhabitant.

THE tabernacle and temple of old had their various apartments, there was the outward, and the inward court, the treaſury, and the prieſts chambers, and there was the *holy of holies*: and ſo in this magnificent building there is the court of God himſelf, with his *throne high and lifted up*; not only the *manſion* of the divine Father, but of the Son alſo, who is repreſented in ſcripture as ſeated at the *right hand* of the throne, *in the heavenly places*[q], *far above all principality, and power, and might*, and dominion, and *every name that is named*[r] there: and the holy ſpirit is likewiſe ſaid to dwell *before the* ſame *throne*[s]. This inhoſpitable world, indeed, afforded the bleſſed *Jeſus* but very poor entertainment, in the days of his humiliation. He complains that *the foxes* had *holes, and the birds of the air had neſts*; while he, who created the world, and was the great Lord of it, found *not* a place in it, *where to lay his head*[t]. His tabernacle of fleſh was itſelf taken down, and that with moſt painful and ignominious circumſtances; but in the world above he has a *glorious body*, and a palace in all reſpects ſuited

[q] Heb. viii. 1. [r] Eph. i. 20. 21. [s] Rev. i. 4. [t] Mat. viii. 20.

ſuited to his character, as the Son of God, and the great Saviour of the church.

ANGELS, in all their various forms and orders, have their ſeveral tabernacles of glory alſo: cherubim and ſeraphim, and all the potentates and powers above have, no doubt, *manſions* of honour and bleſſedneſs ſuited to their various degrees, and the ſeveral ranks they hold in the armies of the Almighty, and in the court of heaven.

NOR can I ſee any reaſon to doubt, that there will be different degrees of ſituation and glory, among the ſaints in that world. All ſhall be full of bleſſedneſs, in proportion to their ſeveral capacities, and deſires; and no inhabitant there, will be uneaſy with his own circumſtances, or envy his neighbour, and covet his poſſeſſions and enjoyments. But the ſcripture ſeems plainly, I think, to encourage us to believe, that the reward above will be proportioned to the progreſs the ſaints have made in grace and uſefulneſs here below. And, methinks, it affords a very delightful proſpect, when we contemplate the world of heaven as fully peopled, with the *hundred and forty and four thouſand*, and *thouſands of thouſands*, *a great multitude of all nations*, and *kindreds, and people, and tongues, which no man can number*[u]; and yet every free-

[u] Rev. vii. 9.

holder in that country, in poſſeſſion of his own inheritance; the patriarchs and prophets[w] in their ſeveral ſeats of glory, the apoſtles of our bleſſed Lord *on* their *twelve thrones*[x], and the faithful miniſters of the goſpel, who have turned *many to righteouſneſs*, ſhining *as the ſtars for ever and ever*[y]. And, as there is *one glory of the ſun, and another of the moon, and another of the ſtars*, and as *one ſtar differs from another in glory*[z], ſo we ſhall, I doubt not, there ſee every particular believer in his own *manſion*, a glory accommodated to his particular circumſtances, and the progreſs he had made in true religion here below. And, no doubt, this extent of bliſs, this variety and order, will greatly contribute to the happineſs and glory of the whole aſſembly. But,

FOURTHLY, It is a *prepared* glory.

YOU eaſily perceive that this mode of expreſſion is uſed, in order to give us ſtill a higher idea of the bleſſedneſs of heaven. Thus when, on the other hand, the prophet *Iſaiah* wou'd ſet eternal miſery in the fulleſt view, and awaken the moſt dreadful apprehenſions of it in the minds of the people, he calls it *Tophet, which was prepared of old*[a]. And to the ſame purpoſe, *Chriſt* himſelf ſpeaks of it, as the *fire prepared for*

[w] Mat. viii. 11. [x] chap. xix. xxviii. [y] Dan. xii. 3. [z] 1 Cor. xv. 41. [a] Iſa. xxx. 33.

for the devil and his angels[b]. And as extream miſery is thus deſcribed, ſo the ſpiritual proviſions of the goſpel are ſet forth, in the *proverbs*, as a banquet *prepared* by *wiſdom* for us[c]: and thus alſo the great houſeholder in the goſpel is repreſented, as having *prepared* his *dinner*, having *killed his oxen, and his fatlings, and made all things ready*[d]. So here, the ſtate of ultimate bleſſedneſs is not, it ſeems, a building ſuddenly rais'd, but it has been a long time getting ready: it is a kingdom *prepared for* the ſaints, *from* before *the foundation of the world*[e]. The great and noble ſyſtem of this lower world, with its inhabitants and furniture, its firmaments, and luminaries, was the product of the divine *word*, and the work but of *ſix days*. Now, tho' nothing is too difficult for omnipotency; yet, no doubt, the repreſentation in our text is deſigned to raiſe in our minds more exalted ideas of that bliſs, than any of the works of God, which fall under our view, can poſſibly furniſh us with. And what, indeed, muſt that ſtate be, which infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs has been getting ready from all eternity? Thoſe who are to poſſeſs this bleſſedneſs are *preparing* for it: for, *that God might make known the riches*

[b] Mat. xxv. 41. [c] Prov. ix. [d] Mat. xxii. 4. [e] Mat. xxv. 34.

riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy he hath *made ready a people*[f], and *afore prepared* them *unto glory*[g]. And thus then, as *the veſſels are prepared for* this *glory*; ſo *the glory* itſelf with which they are to be filled, is alſo *prepared.* As the peculiar manifeſtation of God's own glory in the world above, is repreſented in the ſcripture, as a *throne* which *the Lord hath prepared* for himſelf, *in the heavens*[h]: ſo the fulleſt evidence of his regard to his people, and that *he is not aſhamed to be called their God*, is ſet forth by this, that *he hath prepared for them a city*[i]: a ſtate of bliſs beyond all human deſcription! for *eye hath not ſeen nor ear heard, neither* hath it *entered into the heart of man* to conceive, what *God hath prepared for them that love him*[k]. And,

2. As this aſſures us of the greatneſs of this glory; ſo it does of its ſuitableneſs too, and how admirably it will be adapted to the circumſtances, and capacities of every inhabitant. When our Lord came down from heaven, and took our nature, in order to ſatisfy for our ſins, a body was *prepared* for him, ſuited to his character, and ſufferings, and effectually fitted to anſwer the ends of that atonement he was about to offer up. And thus, in the caſe before us, he acquaints

[f] Luke i. 17. [g] Rom. ix. 23. [h] Pſal. ciii. 19.
[i] Heb. xi. 16. [k] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

acquaints the ſons of *Zebedee*, that they ſhou'd *drink indeed of* his *cup*, *and be baptized with* ſufferings like his: *but to ſit on* his *right hand*, *and on* his *left*, that, ſays he, *is not mine to give*, *but it ſhall be given to them*, *for whom it is prepared of my Father*[1]. But this leads me to obſerve,

FIFTHLY, that this bleſſedneſs is *prepared by Chriſt*, and this is part of that work for which he is *aſcended up on high*: *I go*, ſays he, *to prepare a place for you*.

NOTHING ſurely cou'd be more adapted to enlarge our expectations of the glory of the upper-world, than this expreſſion. And this will abundantly appear, if we ſtop a moment, and conſider, who it is that has undertaken *to prepare* this glory for us: not a meer man, not the wiſeſt, richeſt, nobleſt of the human kind: no, nor an angel of the higheſt order neither; but the Son of God himſelf, and ſo poſſeſſed of all thoſe attributes which render him capable of providing a bleſſedneſs, that is perfect in its nature, and eternal in its duration; and one, who is alſo the ſon of man, and ſo engaged, by the participation of our nature, and the ſpecial friendſhip he bears to us, to ſee all the purpoſes of everlaſting love, concerning us, accompliſhed to our greateſt advantage. The immenſe treaſures of heaven are all at

[1] Mat. xx. 23.

at his diſpoſal; all the rich materials of the univerſe are his own; every under-workman, either in this world or that above, is his ſervant; he has a genius and capacity equal to all the difficulties of the work, a greatneſs of mind anſwerable to its magnificence; and then his love and goodneſs have no bounds: nay, as he is our ſaviour, our head, and elder brother, the grandeur of this building is become his own intereſt and glory; and it will certainly bear a ſuitable proportion to the dignity of his character, the greatneſs of his eſtate, and the love he bears to all the family. But more particularly,

1. IT muſt be very glorious, if you conſider what ſamples our great Lord has already given of his infinite capacity and goodneſs. The world which we inhabit, even in all the ruinous diſorder in which we now behold it, and which was occaſioned by the rebellion of its firſt inhabitants, gives us noble proofs of the great abilities and bounty of him that form'd it. The earth and ſeas, the continents and iſlands, the woods and rivers, with all their various product for uſe and ornament, the ſeveral ſpecies of inhabitants with which this world is peopled, and the variety of habitations prepared for their reception, and proviſions for their ſupport, are all noble proofs, as has

has already been obſerved, of the infinite capacity of the great God. And theſe mighty works are all in the ſacred ſcriptures aſcribed to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; he, *in the beginning, laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands*[m]: *all things were made by him*; *and without him was not any thing made that was made*[n]: he form'd the various meteors in all their wonderful appearances; he provided manſions for the ſtars, *and garniſhed the heavens* with thoſe lamps of glory; he appointed the moon its habitation, and he prepared *a tabernacle for the ſun*[o]. The *garden of the Lord*, that was provided for our firſt parents in the rectitude of their nature, was plan'd out in all its beauty, by his contrivance, and planted with that rich profuſion of delicate flowers and fruits by his bountiful hand. Nay the angels of God, thoſe *inviſible principalities and powers were created by Chriſt*[p]: and all the *thrones* on which they ſit, and the innumerable *manſions* of glory in which they dwell, were framed, and pitched by him. He led the children of *Iſrael* thro' the wilderneſs, and provided a *reſt* for them in the land of promiſe. The goſpel church with all its gifts and ordinances, with all its graces and its promiſes, are

[m] Heb. i. 10. [n] John. i. 3. [o] Pſal. xix. 4.
[p] Col. i. 16.

the fruit of his blood, and the workmanſhip of his hands. What then muſt the glory of thoſe *manſions* be, how far beyond all imagination, which he is *preparing* for the members of his myſtical body above, and in which he intends to make the fulleſt diſplay of his perfections? And this will yet appear farther,

2. FROM a conſideration of the love he bears to his people. They are *his portion, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance*[q]: and his love to them is ſtrong and laſting like himſelf; *many waters* have *not* been able to *quench it*, nor *the floods* to *drown it*[r]. He has *loved* them from *everlaſting*[s], and *he loves them to the end*[t]. If his very enemies, by his forbearance, have, for a time, ſuch ſeats of eaſe and honour in this world, what muſt he have *prepared* for the repoſe and comfort of his friends, after all the fatigues, and ſorrows, and ill treatment, they have met with in their way home? If angels, to whoſe nature he was never allied, dwell in ſuch habitations, and ſit on ſuch thrones of glory; what will he not provide for his *brethren*, for thoſe who are *bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh?* Let it be conſidered, what proofs he has given of his love, in the things he hath already done for them; and

[q] Deut. xxxii. 9. [r] Cant. viii. 7. [s] Jer. xxxi. 3. [t] John. xiii. 1.

and ſurely we may from thence form ſome ſmall eſtimate of what he will yet beſtow upon them. For their ſakes he has hitherto ſpared a rebellious world from immediate deſtruction; for their ſakes he has conſtantly held the reins of providential government in his own hand, by which all things have been managed and regulated, from the beginning of time to this day. And what is all this when compared with the ſtupendous undertaking of his grace for their ſalvation? For their ſakes he became incarnate; the great God of heaven became a poor afflicted dying man! His love to his church brought him down from the realms of glory, engaged him to travel thro' the weary wilderneſs of this life, and to ſubmit patiently to all the injuries he met with in our world: for their ſakes innocency itſelf was willing to be adjudged as guilty, the Lord of life and glory was willing to go down into the chambers of death, and the fountain of all *bleſſings* was contented to *be made a curſe*[u]. Let us but ſeriouſly attend to the unparallel'd hiſtory of our Redeemer's ſorrows, his ſufferings, and death, what he underwent from men, and from devils, and from God himſelf, when he *trod the wine preſs* of divine wrath *alone*[w]: let us but reflect upon a fortitude that was to be

[u] Gal. iii. 13. [w] Iſa. lxiii. 3.

ſhaken by no terrors, a patience that no kind of torture could diſturb, a love that ingratitude itſelf could neither extinguiſh, nor abate; and then judge what ſort of ultimate glory that will be, which is provided for thoſe, on whoſe account he thus *humbled himſelf*[x]. If, for their ſakes, he has *thro' death* overcome *him that had the power of death*[y], and vanquiſhed *the god of this world* in his own territories; ſurely, that muſt be a glorious life indeed, which he has won for them, at ſo dear a rate; and which will be the triumphant reward of ſuch a conqueſt. Nor muſt we forget what he has already done in them, as well as for them. Has he *taken* away the *ſtony heart out of their fleſh*, and given *them hearts of fleſh*[z]? Has he exerted his power and love in ſo divine a manner, as to create in them *the new creature*[a], to tranſlate them *out of darkneſs into marvellous light*[b], out of the bondage of Satan into the *liberty of the children of God*[c]? Has he ſent the comforter into their hearts, and given them already, even in this vale of tears, that peace of conſcience, which *paſſes all underſtanding*[d]? Has he *planted* them *in his houſe* below, and fed them *with manna* from above,

[x] Phil. ii. 8. [y] Heb. ii. 14. [z] Ezek. xi. 19. [a] 2 Cor. v. 17. [b] Col. i. 13. 1 Pet. 2. ix. [c] Rom. viii. 21. [d] Phil. iv. 7.

bove, even while they were groaning under a *body of ſin?* Doth he ſeat them at his *table*, *ſpread* it with bleſſings, and make their *cup overflow?* Are they ſometimes, even in this ſinful world, brought *into his banqueting houſe*, and is his *banner of love over them*[e]? Do they ſee the King *in his galleries*, and do they walk with him in his *garden of ſpices?* Doth he now and then, even in this wilderneſs, bring them up to *mount Piſgah* and give them a view of *the good land and Lebanon?* What then are the enjoyments he has been *preparing* for them *of old, and from everlaſting*, which will be the bleſſed iſſue of all their toils, and ſorrows, the fruit of his own unſpeakable ſufferings, and the public and eternal evidence, before all worlds, of his wiſdom, power and love! Let but theſe things be duly conſidered, with all the kindneſs he expreſſed to his diſciples when on earth, the precious promiſes he has left on record, the work in which he is now employ'd at the throne, and the conſtant care he has hitherto taken of his church in general, and every individual member of it in particular; and then let us try to conceive, if we can, of the great things he has *prepared* for them in the world to come.

OUR Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* has given ſuch abundant proofs of his omnipotent, and inſtantaneous

[e] Cant. ii. 4.

ſtantaneous power, that, if he had pleaſed, he could by one ſingle *fiat*, have planted a garden of everlaſting fragrancy and delight; or called a well framed and fortified city, or a beautiful palace into exiſtence for the reception of his choſen people, in a moment. One word from him wou'd command rivers of bliſs to flow eternally, and furniſh the table of heaven with a rich plenty of immortal dainties: but to awaken our expectation, and extend our hopes, the happineſs of the future ſtate is repreſented as a work of much time, or rather a houſe which has been fitting up *from everlaſting:* and that by no leſs hand, than that of *Chriſt* himſelf. And then,

HE is *gone to prepare* this bleſſedneſs for his friends and family. He is pleaſed to ſpeak of himſelf, as of one of the company in a journey, who is *gone* before, to get all things in readineſs for the reſt, who are left behind on the road. Or like *the ark in the wilderneſs*, which was an evident type of the great harbinger of the church, he is gone *before, to ſearch out a reſting-place for his people*[f]. *He is the firſt born from the dead*[g], *the firſt fruits of them that ſlept*[h]; the grave could not detain him; he has burſt its bands, and broken its power by his reſurrection: and when the happy day of general releaſe comes, it will be able to hold them

[f] Num. x. 33. [g] Col. i. 18. [h] 1 Cor. xv. 20.

them no longer. The *heavens opened* to receive him, and he has carried their nature up to glory. *The forerunner is for* them *entered, even Jeſus, made an high prieſt for ever after the order of Melchizedeck*[i]; and *the choſen generation, the royal prieſthood* will follow. As the *patterns of things* before *were purified with blood*, ſo our high prieſt *is entered, not into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itſelf, there to appear in the preſence of God for us*; and he is *not* gone *without blood*; nor yet *with the blood of bulls and goats*, but with *his own blood*[k], *the blood of ſprinkling, which ſpeaks better things than* that *of Abel*[l]: with this he purges, and *prepares* even theſe *heavenly places* themſelves for us. Thus alſo as the *good ſhepherd, who has given his life for the ſheep*[m], he is gone before to *prepare* the fold for his dear flock: as the *Captain of* our *ſalvation*[n], he is entered into the reward of all his toils and conqueſts; and he is there *preparing* a ſeat of glory for every victorious follower. In one word, as the head and repreſentative of the church, and as the heir and elder brother of the family, he is entered upon the poſſeſſion; and all his brethren, and coheirs muſt follow. Thus he *prepares* this glorious habitation

[i] Heb. vi. 20. [k] Heb. chap. ix. [l] Chap. xii. 24.
[m] John x. 11. [n] Heb. ii. 10.

tation for his people by taking poſſeſſion of it, by ſprinkling it with his blood, by employing all his intereſt with the Father, by uſing all his own divine attributes, his influence on the ſpirit, and his abſolute power over all the inhabitants of that world, to contribute to their happy reception, and ineffable and eternal glory there.

IN this manner our great Lord *prepares* his ſaints for heaven and heaven for them: he doth it like himſelf; the happineſs will be adapted to their nature, both with reſpect to body and mind; and as their intellectual and ſpiritual powers will be improved in the moſt exalted manner; ſo they will be furniſh'd with the moſt ſuitable and delightful entertainment. And ſince much of rational happineſs conſiſts in ſociety, our Saviour has taken care we ſhall have good company; ſuch whoſe nature and temper, whoſe holineſs and glory will render them perfectly agreeable. It affords a chriſtian now no ſmall pleaſure, to read what hiſtory has preſerved of the lives of ſuch, as have been eminent for faith and holineſs, in diſtant ages of the world; but what delight will it afford, to converſe with them perſonally, in the perfection of that holineſs, and the glory of that ſalvation, which was the end of their faith and hope? To walk with *Enoch*, and with *Noah*, and hear their account not only

of

of the affairs of the old world, but of their own communion with God in that dark time? to converſe with the *Father of the faithful*, in that ſtate, where his faith has received its full reward, and has given place to viſion? to ſee the great law-giver of *Iſrael* with his vail removed, and his face ſhining with ſuperiour ſplendor, to what the *Iſraelites* beheld, when he deſcended from the mount? to behold him as *the ſervant*, bowing to *the ſon*, and, with the greateſt pleaſure, acknowledging that *the law* was *but* a *ſchoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt*[o]? to hear *the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael* offering up his praiſes in the ſtrains of heaven, and tuning his harp, in the midſt of a conſort of ſaints and angels, to *the ſong of Moſes, and of the Lamb*[p]? to ſee *Iſaiah*, who once trembled at the viſion[q], approach the *throne* itſelf with boldneſs, having his *lips* purged with the blood of *Jeſus*? O raviſhing delight! how is the heart of a believer warmed, with a diſtant, and very imperfect repreſentation of theſe things? And how much more delightful ſtill will that bleſſed ſociety be, when we conſider, that the apoſtles of the new teſtament will be join'd with the patriarchs and prophets of the old? And who can conceive the pleaſure it will afford to converſe with *Peter*, clothed with that tabernacle in its glory, which he once wil-

[o] Gal. iii. 24. [p] Rev. xv. 3. [q] Iſa. vi. 5.

lingly put off for the cauſe of his dear Maſter? with *John*, in all the improvements he has made in the divine grace of love? and to ſee the great apoſtle of the *gentiles*, dreſs'd in the rich apparel of his Redeemer's *righteouſneſs*, and in the poſſeſſion of that *crown* which inſpired him with ſuch diligence and courage in the warfare here below; and *which was laid up for him againſt that day?* to ſee him thus triumphing in the midſt of a numerous circle of converts brought home to *Chriſt* from many nations, by his miniſtry? to behold that army of martyrs of whoſe faith, and patience, and fortitude we have heard ſo much; an innumerable multitude of thoſe *meſſengers of peace*, whoſe *feet* have been *beautiful upon* theſe *mountains*[r]; and ſome of whom have been the inſtruments of our own ſalvation? and, in one word, to converſe with thoſe of our fellow chriſtians with whom we have often *taken ſweet counſel*, in this imperfect ſtate? and to find them, as well as ourſelves, deliver'd from every imperfection, and ſet entirely free from thoſe diſagreeable circumſtances, which often interrupted our intimacy here below? nay, to find many ſouls there which we little expected? and to meet all this triumphant aſſembly in an entire harmony of Judgment and affection, which ſhall

[r] Iſa. lii. 7.

ſhall admit of no abatement for ever? Theſe are bleſſed circumſtances of the heavenly ſtate; and they are greatly heightened and improved, when we conſider, that the glorified ſaints will be united with the angelic world. What an inconceivable pleaſure muſt it afford to behold thoſe *princes*, and *potentates*, thoſe *thrones* and *powers*, *cherubim* and *ſeraphim*, thoſe mighty *angels who excel in* wiſdom and *in ſtrength*[f], and who have been the miniſters of providence and grace in this world; who have ſupported kingdoms, and have overturned them, at the divine command, and as ſubſerved the intereſt of Chriſt and of his church; who have been *miniſtring ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation*[t]? and with thoſe in particular, who have been our own kind and faithful guardians thro' this vale of tears? Such company muſt needs make heaven very delightful; to obſerve the order and harmony, the light and love of this innumerable multitude, and to converſe with them with holy freedom and intimacy. But all this comes infinitely ſhort of the pleaſure we ſhall conceive, in the ſight of our dear and glorified Lord: for he is gone *before to prepare a place for us*, that we *may be with* him *where* he is, and *may behold* his *glory*[u]. Notwithſtanding all the contempt he met with from

 wicked

[f] Pſal. ciii, 20. [t] Heb. i. 14. [u] John xvii. 24.

wicked men, while he was here upon earth, yet the worſt of them were obliged ſometimes to confeſs, that *he ſpake as never man ſpake*[w]: his own diſciples were often raviſh'd with his converſe, in his ſtate of humiliation; and you know when ſome of them ſaw him in his transfigured circumſtances, they were ſo delighted, that they ſeem to have been almoſt willing to have ſat down ſatisfied with that heaven, and to ſeek none higher. Who then ſhall ſay what kind of joy that will be, to ſee that very *Jeſus* who wept and bled for us; not mourning over the obſtinacy of his enemies, nor the weakneſs and folly of his friends; not ſweating blood in the garden, nor *ſcourged* by *Pilate*, and *mocked* by *Herod*, and *his men of war*; not bending under the weight of his croſs, nor bleeding on it at *Golgotha*; but, in thoſe exalted circumſtances *at the right hand of the throne*, where he ſhines in all the glory *of the holy angels*, *in the glory of his* divine *Father*, and *in* all *his own glory*[x]? O how might our thoughts enlarge here! Bleſſed ſituation! where we ſhall *ſee* Chriſt *as he is*[y], ſee the *brightneſs of* the Father's *glory*, *and the expreſs image of his perſon*[z]; ſee our own nature thus exalted, and united to the great God of nature! O what majeſty and grace, what love and

[w] John vii. 46. [x] Luke ix. 26. [y] 1 John iii. 2. [z] Heb. i. 3.

and glory will ſhine in that radiant countenance! O how will every human heart, in that great aſſembly, exult in its relation to him, as the member of ſuch a head! Thus to *ſee Jeſus*, to be with him, to converſe with him as his friends and favourites; to receive from his own hand all the treaſures he has obtained for us, at the vaſt rate of his ſufferings and blood, what conſummate happineſs will this be? Chriſt is *all* [a] to a believer here; and when he has but ſome remote views of him, and can but hear his voice at a diſtance, he is happy in the midſt of a frowning world; what then will be the meaſure of his bliſs, when he ſhall not ſee him *thro' a glaſs darkly, but face to face* [b]? when, thro' his mediation, he ſhall have a full view of the reconciled face of the divine Father, and partake of the light and comfort of the Spirit without meaſure? when he ſhall converſe with his beloved Lord, not by the aid of figures and of ordinances; but with the ſtricteſt, neareſt, fulleſt intimacy, and *ſhall be like him* [c] too, and that for ever? But then,

SIXTHLY, The laſt particular of the *happineſs* of this ſtate, which *Chriſt* gives us, in the words of the text, is, the certainty and ſecurity of it; which is built on his

[a] Col. iii. 11. [b] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [c] 1 John. iii. 2.

his own faithfulneſs. *If it had not been ſo*, ſays he, *I would have told you.*

AND it will appear that there was ſufficient argument in this expreſſion to engage the credit of the diſciples, if we conſider, that *our Saviour* had, all along, while on earth, not only approved himſelf to be *the faithful and true witneſs*[d]; but it had evidently appeared that he was *the truth*[e] itſelf, *the true God and eternal life*[f]. All that he had told the world by the lips of his prophets, and other methods of revelation, had been, from time to time, punctually fulfilled: and he was ſtrictly faithful in his own perſonal miniſtry; he dealt with great and ſmall, with prieſts and people, with the moſt ſteady and conſtant regard to truth, tho' it expoſed him to much perſecution: ſuch was the probity of his converſation, and ſo free were his lips from any *guile*[g], that he never flatter'd the moſt powerful and dangerous enemy, nor the moſt kind and affectionate friend: and this ſhould have ſatisfied the diſciples, and ſhould convince us, that the promiſe of eternal life ſhall certainly be accompliſhed. He faithfully and punctually foretold his own ſufferings, and death, his reſurrection, and the aſtoniſhing things which were to follow; and all came exactly to paſs:

[d] Rev. i. 5. and iii. 14. [e] John. xiv. 6. [f] 1 John v. 20. [g] 1 Pet. ii. 22.

paſs: and therefore he ought to be believed in theſe things which concern the future glory of his church, how difficult ſoever it may be for fleſh and blood to receive them. His diſciples, by following the opinion of many of the *Jews* concerning the *Meſſiah*, and blending the prophecies which relate to his ſecond coming together with thoſe which concern his firſt appearance, and by entertaining carnal notions about his glory, and that of his church, had ran into great miſtakes; and had pleas'd themſelves much with the expectations of temporal grandeur in this kingdom, which they apprehended he was about to ſet up in this world. But tho' this opinion was ſo pleaſing to fleſh and blood, and the contradicting it was ſo diſagreeable to them, yet he faithfully and conſtantly oppoſed it: and ſo we may juſtly conclude, if their had been no heaven, no bleſſedneſs to come, he *wou'd* as faithfully *have told* them *ſo*. He propheſied the deſtruction of his own nation, the ruin of their ſtate and temple; and it all came punctually to paſs. He had juſt now foretold the doom of *Judas*, and *Judas* went *to his place*[h] accordingly; and therefore there was the greateſt reaſon in the world to believe him, when he ſaid he was going *to prepare* a ſuitable one, *a place* of eternal reſt and happineſs for his dear and faithful

[h] Acts. i. 25.

faithful followers. He frequently put his diſciples in mind of the grievous ſufferings they ſhould go thro'; nay, he has left it upon record, that all his people, in every generation, ſhall paſs thro' *tribulation*[i] and *perſecution*[k] *in this world*; that they who *follow* him muſt *deny* themſelves, and *daily take up the croſs*[l] here, if they will *reign with him* hereafter: and the treatment of believers, in all ſucceeding generations, has abundantly verified theſe predictions. And therefore, if there had been no future bleſſedneſs, he that was faithful in every other thing, would have certainly undeceived his followers with reſpect to this. To theſe things it muſt alſo be added, that he was now going to ſeal his teſtimony with his blood; and therefore it could not be, that he, who had never deceived them before, ſhould lead them into a miſtake, in a matter of ſo much importance, now.

THUS have I endeavoured, in as brief a manner as I well could, to open to you the account, our Lord gives us, of that bleſſedneſs, which he is gone before *to prepare for* all his faithful followers; together with the evidence we have of the certainty of its accompliſhment. It remains,

III. THAT

[i] John. xvi. 33. [k] 2 Tim iii. 12. [l] Luke. ix. 23. Mat. xvi. 24.

III. THAT I ſhew you what improvement we ſhould make of theſe things; and that eſpecially on this mournful occaſion. And,

1. IF a future ſtate of retribution is ſuch an awful certainty, let impenitent ſinners reflect, a little, on the folly and madneſs of their conduct. I am ſure you are convinced, that your *beſt eſtate* here *is* but *vanity and vexation of ſpirit*[1]: and that there is no gratification in this empty world that is equal to the deſires of an immortal mind. Let me beſeech you then to conſider that your tabernacles are falling down, your precious ſouls have had frequent warnings of their removal; and all the ſenſual pleaſures, you have been ſo eagerly and ſinfully purſuing, will afford you but very little more of that poor delight you have found in them. Well then —and is there ſuch a building in the world of glory? are there ſuch *manſions* purchaſed by the blood of Jeſus, and *prepared* for returning prodigals? doth the gentle Saviour yet, with open arms, beſeech you to return? and will you continue to reject his counſels, and deſpiſe his reproofs? Are you content to be ſhut out for ever from all

[1] Pſ. xxxix. 5. Eccleſ. i. 14.

this bleſſedneſs? Unhappy choice indeed! But you are alſo to take this further conſideration into the ſad account, that your obſtinacy and impenitency will, not only expoſe you to an eternal excluſion from this glorious habitation, which I have been attempting to deſcribe, from all the bleſſed *manſions* above, and all the happy proviſion there; ſo that your naked ſouls ſhould wander on dark mountains for ever, and be expoſed to everlaſting want: but, O ſad news! there is a place alſo *prepared* for you, where the *wrath of the Lamb* [m] ſhall be fully diſplay'd; where the Son of God ſhall come *travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength*, with his *garments dip'd in* your *blood* [n], which were once ſtain'd with his own. Are there many apartments of glory in his Father's houſe, for poor ſinners that return? remember, that in the priſon of his juſtice there are *many* doleful *manſions* too: they are ſtrong, and well guarded, from whence you can never eſcape; there are already millions of ruin'd ſouls laid up in chains there; and there is yet room for you. *Tophet was prepared of old* [o], there the *worm dieth not, and* the flames can never be *quenched* [p]. If the afflictions of time are ſo hard to be borne, what muſt that

[m] Rev. vi. 16. [n] Iſa. lxiii. 1, 2. [o] Iſa. xxx. 33. [p] Mark. ix. 46.

that miſery be which has been making ready from all eternity, and ſhall endure for ever? a vengeance *prepared* by Chriſt, to diſplay his own juſtice and righteouſneſs, and that of his divine Father; a vengeance proportioned to his grace, and which will be a ſuitable and everlaſting puniſhment of the contempt of it? O what burning *manſions*, what everlaſting plagues are *preparing* for thoſe who continue obſtinate againſt the light of the goſpel! Their puniſhment muſt exceed that of heathens and infidels, of *Sodom and Gomorrah*[q]! *Kiſs the Son*, therefore, *leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way, for if his wrath be kindled but a little: bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him*[r]. O may the terrors of the Lord perſwade you to fly to the *city of refuge!* may his love and grace engage you to *lay hold of the hope ſet before you!* The *manſions* of glory, I have been faintly deſcribing, were prepared for ſuch ſinners as you; publicans and harlots, and perſecutors have, thro' rich grace, entered in: *Mary Magdalene*, who was herſelf the habitation of devils, the thief that died by the ſide of our Saviour, and *Saul* the bloody perſecutor of the church, have found admiſſion there. And if you come, under the ſentence of your condemnation, to the foot-

[q] Mat. x. 15. [r] Pſ. ii. 12.

ſtool of divine mercy; if, with broken and contrite ſpirits, you fly by faith to the blood of Jeſus for cleanſing, and to his righteouſneſs for acceptance; *tho' your ſins be as ſcarlet*, he will make them *as white as ſnow*; and tho' they be *red like crimſon*, he will make them *as wool*[r]. Now is the *accepted time*, now is *the day of ſalvation*[s]: *to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation*[u]. If you throw down the weapons of your oppoſition, and ſubmit to the ſceptre of his grace, you ſhall find peace and pardon here, a place in his houſe, and plenty at his table; and no tongue can deſcribe the glory of thoſe *manſions* which you ſhall dwell in forever. But,

2. MAY what has been ſaid have its proper influence on the minds of thoſe who profeſs godlineſs. If ſuch be our expectations, what care ſhould we take, what ſtrict examination ſhould we enter into, leſt after all the hopes with which we have flattered ourſelves, we ſhould be ſhut out at laſt with *the fooliſh virgins*, and have our *place* among *hypocrites*? And if on a fair trial of our own hearts and ways, we find our hopes well grounded; how ſhould we admire and adore rich and diſtinguiſhing grace now? and how much more ſhall we do ſo hereafter,

[r] Iſa. i. 18. [s] 2 Cor. vi. 2. [u] Heb. iii. 8.

after, when we find ourſelves ſafely lodg'd in theſe bleſſed *manſions*, *whoſe* families are *poor in Manaſſeh*, *and* we ſome of *the leaſt in* our *fathers houſes*[w]? And ſince we have ſuch great and glorious expectations as theſe, *what manner of perſons ought* we *to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs*[x]? How ſhould we *prepare* for an entrance into ſuch an holy habitation? How patiently ſhould we bear all the inconveniencies of the way thither? Plain fare, and a rough lodging will do on the road, ſince our home is not far off. O how frequently, and how delightfully ſhould we entertain our minds, with a contemplation on the eaſe and ſafety, and all the plentiful accommodations which our bleſſed Lord, according to the riches of his unbounded grace, is *preparing* for us in the *houſe* of his *Father!*

To which I would add, that theſe conſiderations ſhould alſo reconcile us, for a time, to the abſence of Chriſt himſelf: and much more ſhould they engage us to ſubmit, with becoming reſignation, to the divine will, when our fellow chriſtians get the ſtart of us; and when our dear and faithful miniſters enter into their reward, and leave us behind upon the way. 'Tis hard parting indeed with ſuch uſeful friends, eſpecially, at a ſeaſon when we greatly want their help. But ſtill let us

[w] Judg. vi. 15. [x] 2 Pet. iii. 11.

us conſider, if their work is done before ours, it is highly reaſonable they ſhould go to reſt before us. Their *manſions* it ſeems are ready, and it would be hardly kind to repine when they enter into the poſſeſſion of 'em. They are got into better company, even into the arms of that *Jeſus*, in whom they believed, and whom they loved, and preached, and imitated here below. Well—let us then *follow* them, as they have followed Chriſt; and in a little while we ſhall be there too; we ſhall be with them, and *with Chriſt* himſelf, *which is far better.*

SUCH conſiderations as theſe may, I hope, help you to bear up, with a chriſtian temper, under the great loſs you have lately ſuſtained. A loſs which, I am ſenſible, calls for all the aſſiſtance that the friends of true religion can give you, in order to engage your reſignation to the divine pleaſure. I heartily wiſh what has been drop'd may be bleſs'd to your inſtruction, and comfort; and that what I have farther to ſay of the reverend perſon, whoſe deceaſe gave the mournful occaſion for this diſcourſe, may not rather aggravate your ſorrows. I am ſure I have no need of any other apology, for the account I ſhall give you of him; without it be that it is ſo ſhort, and imperfect. For, if *the memory of the juſt is bleſſed*[y],

bleſſed[y], and if the names of all ſuch are to *be* had *in everlaſting remembrance*[z], then certainly we ought to ſet up ſpecial memorials of thoſe, *who have had the rule over us in the Lord, who have ſpoken to us the word of God*, and who have been remarkably eminent for their piety, and the faithful diſcharge of that important truſt which was committed to them; that ſo others, as well as ourſelves, may be ſtir'd up ſtedfaſtly to maintain the pure doctrine they preach'd, and, with holy ardor, to *follow their faith*[a], and copy after their excellent examples.

Mr. *Collet* was born at *Longborough*, in the county of *Glouceſter*. He had the honour and happineſs to deſcend from very pious parents; who labour'd ſo ſucceſsfully to imbue his tender years with ſacred knowledge, and the fear of God, that the ſaving impreſſions of the divine ſpirit appeared very early on his heart: ſo that, in his laſt illneſs, he was heard to ſay, that he had *been affectionately concerned for the intereſt of religion for fifty years*: by which it appears, that theſe impreſſions began when he was but ſix years of age.

IT is not exactly certain at what time he put on a public profeſſion of religion; but it was certainly while he was very young: for ſuch was his early piety and gravity, the ripeneſs

[y] Prov. x. 7. [z] Pſal. cxii. 6. [a] Heb. xiii. 7.

ripeneſs of his natural abilities, his acquaintance with the ſcriptures, and experimental religion, that he was called into the ſervice of the goſpel, when he was hardly ſeventeen years of age. And tho' his modeſty, and riper judgment would afterwards often make him bluſh, at the remembrance of ſo early an appearance in public; yet he was, from the firſt, greatly owned in his work. The want of ſome advantages in his younger time, was abundantly ſupplied by his ſtrong natural parts, a diligent application to reading and ſtudy, and moſt of all, by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he diligently ſought by conſtant and fervent ſupplications to the throne, and which were eminently poured out upon him. He maintained, thro' the rich grace of God, an unblameable character in private, as well as in public life. The good old principles of the reformation were well digeſted by his judgment, and laid deep in his experience; ſo that, thro' all the violent and artful oppoſition which the great doctrines of our holy religion have met with in theſe late times, and while many have departed from the faith, who once made a ſplendid profeſſion of it, and many more have wavered in their judgment, and languiſhed in their zeal, he maintained a warm and ſteady regard to *the truth as it is in Jeſus*, to the laſt; and yet with all

all that moderation, and charity that becomes the goſpel. He was not only a very lively and popular, but a very judicious preacher; and he continued in a ſeries of very uſeful, and indefatigable labours, in the ſervice of *Chriſt*, for forty years; a conſiderable part of which time was employ'd in the paſtoral care of your ſouls. Many of you will teſtify, with what fervency he was uſed to pray for your ſalvation; how faithfully he laid your ſtate before you, and how affectionately he wreſtled with you when in your ſins; how plainly, and how powerfully he opened up to you the myſteries of the goſpel; how he rejoiced at your converſion; how he cultivated the beginnings of grace in your hearts; and with what holy diligence he *watched over you in the Lord* [b], as one that knew he *muſt give an account* [c]. He not only taught you *publicly*, but *from houſe to houſe* [d]. And I am perſwaded you will not eaſily forget, with what ſpiritual love and wiſdom, he improved his chriſtian viſits; and, with what ready and prudent advice, he often aſſiſted you in your temporal affairs. I need not put you in mind how much he denied himſelf for your ſakes; and with what wiſe and humble frugality he regulated the expences of his own family, that he

[b] 1 Theſſ. v. 12. [c] Heb. xiii. 17. [d] Acts xx. 20.

might be able to continue in your ſervice, and ſet you a proper example, at the ſame time, of charity to the poor, and hoſpitality to the ſtranger; in a word, how cloſely he copied after the pattern of the great apoſtle; for he ſought *not yours, but you*[e]: he was *gentle* towards *you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her* children[f]. *Who* was *weak* and afflicted *among you, and* he was *not weak*, and touched with tender ſympathy? *Who* was *offended, and* he *burnt not*[g] with chriſtian concern? *Ye are witneſſes*, brethren, *and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably* he *behaved* himſelf *among you*; *how* he *exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father doth his children) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory*[h].

NOR was his uſefulneſs confined to his own peculiar charge, but he took many painful and hazardous journeys, at ſtated ſeaſons, to viſit other churches, and communicate of thoſe ſpiritual gifts to them, in which he abounded; and great were his ſucceſſes in theſe laborious circuits, to the converſion of many ſinners, and the edification of the ſaints.

As he might, indeed, well be called the father of his people, and a faithful ſervant to

[e] 2 Cor. xii. 14. [f] 1 Theſſ. ii. 7. [g] 2 Cor. xi. 29.
[h] 1 Theſſ. ii. 10, 11, 12.

to his great Maſter; ſo, I believe, few have exceeded him in the tender characters of an huſband, and a parent in his own family. It was God's great mercy to him, that he enjoy'd ſuch returns of love and duty. What he ſaw of the image of *Chriſt* in any of his children was his greateſt joy; and the reſt know, that nothing he more earneſtly thirſted after, and prayed for, than that they might be *born again.*

HIS abundant labours were thought to be too hard for his conſtitution, tho' not naturally weak; ſo that, when his friends well hoped that he might be continued much longer a bleſſing among them, he fell into a lingring illneſs; which he endured with great patience and ſerenity of mind. And tho' he was willing, if it had been the pleaſure of God, to have continued in his warfare longer for the benefit of the church, and the advantage of his family; yet, he often ſaid, his *will* was *ſwallowed up in the will of God.* And, under the apprehenſions of his decaying nature, he would frequently obſerve, *how dreadful* his *caſe would have been, if the great work had been* then *to do.* When his weakneſs took him off from public ſervice, his time was chiefly employ'd, either in faithful and chriſtian counſels, and exhortations

to ſuch as came to viſit him, or to thoſe of his own family. And when a friend expreſs'd her fears, that his exceſſive labours had impaired his conſtitution; he anſwered, with great vehemency, that *if* he *had ten thouſand lives*, he *would freely ſpend them all for the intereſt of* his *dear Lord: and if* he *thought the abatement of* his *public work wou'd not be attended with* his *recovery for more ſervice*, he *wou'd go forth and preach the goſpel, to the laſt moment* he was *able to ſtand.*

WHEN he apprehended his end drew near, he met the ſentence of Death with great reſignation; and tho', in a ſenſe of his own unworthineſs, he cried out with the publican, "*Lord be merciful to me a ſin-*"*ner*[i];" yet he ſaid alſo with *Job*, "*I* "*know that my Redeemer liveth, and tho'* "*after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet* "*in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God*[k]:" and, "*tho'* "*he ſlay me*, and my family too, *yet will I truſt in him*[l]." He declared, he died *in the faith of thoſe doctrines which* he had *preached to others*; that he believed *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be a perfect Saviour*: "*and* "as *he is able*, ſays he, *to ſave to the utter-*"*moſt*[m], *ſo I venture my all, both body and* "*ſoul on him; for he has engaged to take* "*care*

[i] Luke. xviii. 13. [k] Job. xix. 25, 26. [l] Ch. xiii. 15. [m] Heb. vii. 25.

" *care of both*". He rejoiced in this, *that tho'* he *muſt die*, he ſhould *die but once*; *and after that, this laſt enemy* ſhou'd *be baniſhed for ever*; adding, that his *triumph* was *in a living Redeemer:* and then taking up the language of the apoſtle *Paul*, " *I have* " *fought*, ſays he, the *good fight*, *I have* " *finiſhed my courſe*, *I have kept the faith.* " *Henceforth there is laid up for me a* " *crown of righteouſneſs*, *which the Lord the* " *righteous Judge ſhall give me at that* " *day: and not to me only, but unto all* " *them alſo that love his appearing*[n]." Under the increaſing pains of his diſeaſe, he would often, in the midſt of his uncommon patience, cry out, " *O that I had wings like a dove; then wou'd I fly away, and be at* " *reſt*[o] *!*" at everlaſting *reſt!* O how would that word EVERLASTING dwell upon his lips! and with what inexpreſſible pleaſure, would he repeat it again, and again? The laſt time the ſupper of our Lord was adminiſtred in this place, a little before his deceaſe, he was very deſirous to have been brought hither, to take his dying leave of his dear flock at that table, as his Lord did before him; and to have enjoy'd, there, a foretaſte of that bleſſedneſs, which he was going fully to poſſeſs. But, when he was diſwaded by his friends; " *well*, ſays

[n] 2 Tim. iv. 7. 8. [o] Pſ. lv. 6.

ſays he, " *tho' they will not let me go to* " *the table of the Lord,* I will *go to the* " *Lord of the table.*"

HE continued, in the perfect enjoyment of his rational faculties, to the very laſt. And, when the ſigns of his approaching diſſolution came upon him, a dear friend aſked him, how it was with him? To which he anſwered—" ALL JOY, *I am go-* " *ing to my Father—O that I were in my* " *Redeemer's boſom!*" And then, looking round his bed at his weeping family; " *you* " *weep,* ſays he, *but others,* meaning his " friends above, *will ſoon rejoice; and if you* " *could but behold me one hour after I am* " *got home, you would not wiſh me back a-* " *gain.*" The ſame friend, telling him, that there was a guard of angels ready to conduct him thither: " O, ſays he, " THAT I WERE AMONG THEM." And then, with a moſt pleaſant, and heavenly air upon his countenance, he bid his dear family and friends FAREWELL, and took his immediate flight to the *manſion prepar-ed for* him, in the land of reſt and bleſ-ſedneſs.

THUS lived, and thus died this excel-lent perſon: and what remains now, but that we make a becoming improvement of ſo inſtructive a providence?

I am

I AM ſure, we who are employ'd in the work of the miniſtry, may find, in his conduct, a pattern greatly worthy of our imitation: and it will be happy for us if, in ſuch an experimental exerciſe, and improvement in the graces of our holy religion, and ſuch a faithful diſcharge of our labours, we may, like him, be *prepared* for the ſame triumphant entrance into glory.

AND for you, who have been ſo many years bleſſed with ſo holy, ſo faithful, and ſo wiſe a guide, may the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith, the purity of your lives, your zeal for God, and your love to one another ſhew, that the many tears you have ſo juſtly ſhed under ſuch an awful diſpenſation, have ſprung from a true ſenſe of his effectual uſefulneſs to your precious ſouls. And, permit me to ſay, that as God only can make up your loſs; ſo you can in no inſtance ſhew your regard to the memory of your deceaſed paſtor more, nor be more likely to ſecure the divine preſence among you, than by following his dying advice; in a ſtrict adherence to that pure *doctrine*, in which you have been built up, and a cloſe *fellowſhip* with one another; in diligently labouring to maintain that *peace*, which has ſo remarkably ſubſiſted among you, during the whole courſe of his paſtoral care; in crying earneſtly to *the Lord of the harveſt*, for a proper

proper ſucceſſor to this important charge; and in your future choice, not ſeeking your *own things*, but *the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's*[p].

GIVE me leave, in one word alſo, to addreſs myſelf to thoſe who have long attended on the miniſtry of this worthy man, and yet ſtill remain *in the gall of bitterneſs and in the bonds of iniquity*[q]. I tremble indeed at the thoughts of their condition! To continue inſenſible under ſo awakening, ſo inſtructive, ſo perſwaſive a miniſtry, how dreadful is your caſe! How will you be able to look ſuch a ſwift witneſs in the face, in the great day! Remember, *being dead he yet ſpeaketh*[r]. Such was his compaſſion for your ſouls, that it was one of the laſt wiſhes of his departing ſpirit, that what might be ſaid on this occaſion might be of more real ſervice to you, than the work of his whole life. God grant, that his requeſt may be graciouſly anſwered; and that you may have ſuch a view of the deplorable condition you are in, that you may *give no ſleep to your eyes, nor ſlumber* to your *eyelids, till* you *have found a place for Chriſt*[s] in your hearts, and have been led to behold the reconciled face of God, thro' him!

MAY what has been ſaid be alſo owned, and bleſſed to the inſtruction, and comfort of

[p] Phil. ii. 21. [q] Acts viii. 23. [r] Heb. xi. 4. [s] Pſal. cxxxii. 4, 5.

of his mournful family. Love and pity they may reaſonably expect; and, I perſwade myſelf, they will meet with both, from all the friends of ſo valuable a man. But this is their chief ſpring of comfort, that the Lord lives for ever; and if he *is the father of the fatherleſs, and the judge of the widow*[t], he is ſo, in a ſpecial manner, to the families of the faithful ſervants of his own houſhold. The eyes of many will be on the children of ſo excellent a perſon, and his dying charge will, I hope, never be forgotten by them. There are few circumſtances can render ſin more aggravated, or ſinners more contemptible, than when it is indulg'd by perſons who have had the privelege of ſuch an education: it is in this caſe ſhocking, even to impious perſons themſelves. But I ſpeak not this, from any apprehenſions of ſuch a ſad conſequence: no—we all, bleſſed be God, hope *better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation*[u]. And if you thus tread in the ſteps of your worthy father, it will then be your great honour, indeed, to have deſcended from ſuch a parent; and you may be aſſured that his God will be yours.

To put a period to this long diſcourſe, may we all make ſuch improvement of the ſolemnity, that occaſion'd it, as to *redeem* pre-

[t] Pſal. lxviii. 5. [u] Heb. vi. 9.

cious *time*[w], and *work while it is day*, becauſe *the night cometh when no man can work*[x]: may we ſee to it that our *hearts are ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our* converſations *waſhed with pure water*[y]; and that our houſes, here below, are furniſhed and perfumed with true religion. And then, in the exerciſe of a ſteady faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*, and a holy conformity to his whole will, we may, in the midſt of all the trying providences of time, look upwards with comfort to that building *in the heavens*, our *Father's houſe*, which is *made* without *hands*; humbly, and joyfully expecting, thro' the intereſt of our great advocate, in his due time, to be ſafely lodg'd in the happy *manſions prepared* for us there.

[w] Eph. v. 16. [x] John ix. 4. [y] Heb. x. 22.

BRITISH MUSEUM

F I N I S.

Lately publiſhed by the ſame Author.

1. *GOD's awful Summons to a ſinful Nation conſidered:* in a Sermon preach'd *Nov.* 27, 1737. in Commemoration of the dreadful Storm, which happened on that Day, in the Year 1703. *The Second Edit.*

2. *The Chriſtian Strife for the Faith of the Goſpel.* A Sermon preach'd before a Society of Miniſters and Gentlemen, engaged in a Deſign for the Encouragement of young Men in their Studies for the Miniſtry. 1738. *The Second Edition.*

3. *National Ingratitude exemplified, in the Caſe of* Gideon, *and his Family; and applied to the* preſent times. A Sermon preach'd in *Little Wild-ſtreet, Novemb.* 5, 1740. *The Fifth Edition.*

4. *The Nature, and Reward of true Liberality.* A Sermon preached at the Funeral of Mr. *Samuel Burch,* 1740.

Sold by Aaron Ward *in* Little Britain.

Where may be had, in Four Volumes, Octavo.

The Works of the late Reverend and Learned Mr. *Joſeph Stennett.* Containing not only a Collection of thoſe printed in his Life-time, but alſo a large Number of Sermons, together with divers Tracts and Poems, never before publiſhed. To which is prefixed ſome Account of his Life.

Shortly

Books ſold by Aaron Ward *in* Little Britain.

Shortly will be Publiſhed,

The unſearchable Depth of God's Judgments conſidered; or, A Diſcourſe on the Myſteries of Divine Providence. By the late Rev^d. Mr. *Joſeph Collet*. Sold by *A. Ward* in *Little Britain*.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Where alſo may be had,

A practical Expoſition on the whole Fifty-Third Chapter of *Iſaiah*. Containing a lively Proſpect of the bitter Sufferings and Agonies of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, in order to accompliſh the Work of Man's Redemption. With the Glories and Benefits thence reſulting to himſelf and all true Believers. Fitly applicable to Sacramental Occaſions. By the late Reverend Divine, *Thomas Manton*, D. D. *N. B.* This is not in either of the Doctor's Five Volumes in Folio.

The Exalted Saviour, or Jeſus Chriſt the Lord and God of True Believers: In ſeveral Sermons, deliver'd lately in *Gravel Lane, Southwark*. By *Zephaniah Marryat*, D. D. Miniſter of the Goſpel.

The Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, reſpecting the Meſſiah, conſider'd, and proved to be literally fulfill'd in *Jeſus*; containing an Anſwer to the Objections of the Scheme of Literal Prophecy. By *John Gill*.